

# **AN ASSESSMENT OF TALENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TARGETING GS-12/13 LEVEL MEMBERS OF THE ARMY ACQUISITION CORPS WORKFORCE**

**SENIOR SERVICE COLLEGE FELLOWSHIP STRATEGY RESEARCH  
PROJECT**

**DAU RESEARCH REPORT 10-007**



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## **ABSTRACT**

Knowledge work is the centerpiece of the Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) workforce. The increase of knowledge work in the private sector, economic globalization, government in-sourcing initiatives, and generation cultural shifts have created intense competition in recruitment and retention of our nation's talent. The Army Acquisition Workforce talent management practices and strategies need to address this changing environment.

The importance of further research into this problem has been identified by the U.S. Army War College on its 2009 Key Strategic Issues List (KSIL) as: "Assess efforts to identify, manage, and sustain the Army's intellectual and technological talent." Current literature states that the most important asset of any organization is its people—their skills and abilities. This asset is commonly referred to as intellectual capital or talent. Intellectual capital is a combination of both competence and commitment (Ulrich, 1998); therefore, talent development and management programs are a key component to assessing the effectiveness of identifying, managing, sustaining, and retaining intellectual capital.

Several research studies have investigated the practices and effectiveness of managing intellectual capital and talent development in the commercial sector (Chambers, 1998 and Holtshouse, 2009). This research project will conduct a similar study in the government sector, specifically the AAC workforce, comparing the results to the commercial sector studies to gain further insight into which commercial practices can best be applied to improve the identification, management, and retention of intellectual and technological talent to effectively support the 21<sup>st</sup> century U.S. Army.

This research project followed an applied research methodology. Research performed is of the descriptive category. This researcher collected qualitative data through the use of surveys of the target population. The target population is Army acquisition workforce employees at the GS-12/GS-13 or National Security Personnel System (NSPS) Pay Band Level 2 performing work at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama; Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland; and Detroit Arsenal, Michigan.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Introduction and Background**

Knowledge work is the centerpiece of the Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) workforce. The AAC workforce is charged with the responsibility to “develop, test, acquire, field, and sustain products” to support U.S. Army full spectrum operations (Thompson, 2006). In order to successfully accomplish this mission, AAC employees are required to complete certification in specific career fields at certain levels related to their level of responsibility in the workplace (Spisak, 2007). The criticality of knowledge work in the AAC is evidenced by a predominance of career fields that are technical in nature and require explicit knowledge and experience in areas such as program management, systems engineering, life cycle logistics, contracting, or test and evaluation. Without these skilled knowledge workers, the AAC would be unable to perform its mission.

The increase of knowledge work in the private sector, economic globalization, government in-sourcing initiatives, and generation cultural shifts have created intense competition in recruitment and retention of our nation’s talent. This competition is driven by a strong demand for talented knowledge workers with only a limited supply of these skilled workers available (Chambers, 1998). For example, it is estimated that the U.S. industry will need 10 million new highly skilled workers over the next decade coupled with U.S. industry anticipating losing over 10 percent of their existing workforce by 2010 due to retirements of baby boomers (Mathis, 2008). This situation makes recruiting and retaining talented knowledge workers critical to both industry and government labor sectors. The Army acquisition workforce talent management practices and strategies need to address this changing environment.

The importance of further research into this problem has been identified by the U.S. Army War College on its 2009 KSIL as: “Assess efforts to identify, manage, and sustain the Army’s intellectual and technological talent.” Literature states that the most important asset of any organization is its people—their skills and abilities (Ulrich, 1998). This asset is commonly referred to as intellectual capital or talent. Intellectual capital is a combination of both competence and commitment (Ulrich, 1998); therefore, talent development and management programs are a key component to assessing the effectiveness of identifying, managing, sustaining, and retaining intellectual capital.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this research is to identify which intellectual capital and talent management practices GS-12/GS-13 AAC employees value the most, which intellectual capital and talent development practices GS-12/GS-13s view as the highest priorities of leaders in the organization, and to evaluate how well these results are synchronized.

## **Overview of Methodology**

This research project followed an applied research methodology. Research performed is of the descriptive category. This researcher collected qualitative data through the use of surveys of the target population. The target population is Army acquisition workforce employees at the GS-12/GS-13 or NSPS Pay Band Level 2 performing work at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama; Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland; and Detroit Arsenal, Michigan.

## **Research Questions**

The primary research question of this research project is: Are existing AAC workforce intellectual capital and talent development practices currently in place effective in identifying, managing, sustaining, and retaining the Army’s intellectual and technological talent at GS-12/13 level?

Secondary and supporting research questions that will be investigated are: What intellectual capital and talent development management practices are valued by employees in the AAC workforce at the GS-12/13 level? Which intellectual capital and talent development management practices are used in the AAC?

### **Research Hypothesis**

This researcher's hypothesis is that AAC organizations do not effectively apply intellectual capital and talent development practices to successfully identify, sustain, and retain Army acquisition intellectual and technological talent at the GS-12/13 level.

### **Limitations of this Study**

One of the limitations of this study is that it is targeted only at the GS-12/GS-13 level. This limits the applicability of the study across the more general acquisition workforce. The GS-12/GS-13 level was selected as the target population for this research due to this level being equivalent to a middle-management-level executive and serving as prime succession candidates for the retiring baby boomer population in government executive positions.

Another limitation is that the study will be focused on only populations at three major hubs of the acquisition community where life cycle management commands are located. These hubs are more focused on development, fielding, and sustainment. Consequently, acquiring, testing, and evaluating organizations of the AAC may be underrepresented.

### **Definition of Key Words and Terms**

**Competence** – is defined as the skill level of employees (Ulrich, 1998).

**Commitment** – is defined as self-motivation of employees to do good work (Ulrich, 1998).

**Full Spectrum Operations (FSO)** – is defined as “Army forces combined offensive, defensive, and stability or civil support operations simultaneously as part of an interdependent joint force to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative, accepting prudent risk to create opportunities to achieve

decisive results. They employ synchronized action—lethal and nonlethal—proportional to the mission and informed by a thorough understanding of all variables of the operational environment. Mission command that conveys intent and an appreciation of all aspects of the situation guides the adaptive use of Army forces” (HQDA, 2008).

**Human capital** – is defined as equivalent to the definition of intellectual capital as identified below in the context of this study.

**Intellectual capital** – is defined as the level of competence of employees multiplied by the level of commitment of employees in the context of this study (Ulrich, 1998). This definition implies that highly competent employees who are not committed to the organization result in little intellectual capital for the organization. Intellectual capital is synonymous with talent in the context of this study.

**Knowledge worker** – is defined as an individual who is valued for their ability to interpret information within a specific subject area. Knowledge workers often advance the overall understanding of that subject area through analysis, design, and development (Drucker, 2002). Knowledge workers are fueled by expertise, insight, and research skills. Knowledge workers use these skills to define problems, identify alternatives, and implement solutions in an effort to influence organization decisions, priorities, and strategies.

**Talent** – is defined as equivalent to the definition of intellectual capital as identified above in the context of this study.

**Talent development** – is defined as equivalent to the definition of talent management as identified below in the context of this study.

**Talent management** – is the processes and practices of an organization that are focused on enhancing the attraction, development, and retention of key human resources in the organization (Mathis, 2008).

## **CHAPTER 2** **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

Literature over the past decade has highlighted the importance of intellectual capital to the success of corporate industry. The similar reliance on knowledge work by the AAC suggests that this literature will also apply to government practices in intellectual capital and talent management. Dave Ulrich (1998) identifies six reasons why intellectual capital has become a critical issue for organizational success.

First, intellectual capital is essentially the only appreciable asset for any organization. Other assets such as real property, machinery, and equipment start to depreciate from the moment they are acquired. Intellectual capital must grow for an organization to prosper (Ulrich, 1998). Consequently, a manager's responsibility is to make "knowledge productive" by transforming the organization's intellectual capital into customer value (Ulrich, 1998). Douglas Ivester, President and Chief Operating Officer of Coca-Cola, emphasized this point when he said, "People are our defining assets" (Ulrich, 1998).

Ulrich's (1998) second reason is that amount of knowledge work is increasing dramatically. This is also supported by Mathis' (2008) estimates that more than 10 million new knowledge work jobs will be created over the next decade.

The third reason is that talented employees with the greatest amount of intellectual capital have essentially become volunteers because the best employees are likely to find job opportunities in many different companies. This shows that employees have choices about where they work, which makes them volunteers to the firm that they choose. The definition of a volunteer involves a strong commitment of the individual because of an emotional bond. These

employees are less interested in financial return compared to the value and the meaning of their work.

Fourth, managers frequently ignore or fail to value intellectual capital. For example, Ulrich (1998) highlights that in a career workshop with 60 high-potential managers at a successful global company, 50 percent stated that they did not plan to stay with the company until retirement; and 90 percent of this group knew someone who had voluntarily left the firm in the past six months due to a tremendous increased workload. When one of the group members approached a senior executive about these concerns, he was told that a job in this company was a good one; everyone who did not want to work hard had a backup; and further discussion of work-life balance was not useful for business results (Ulrich, 1998).

Ulrich's (1998) fifth reason is that employees with the greatest amount of intellectual capital are often the least appreciated. Ulrich (1998) cites studies that have correlated front-line employees' attitudes toward the company directly with resulting customer attitudes toward the firm. This shows that investment in developing a high level of competence and commitment in these front line employees is critical to the firm creating customer value.

The sixth reason that intellectual capital is a critical issue is that senior-executive-level investments in intellectual capital are often ill-focused (Ulrich, 1998). For example, executives often talk about work-family issues or balance. The Army often cites this as "Mission First, People Always." All of these appear to imply that after business is taken care of, then we use what time is left to balance our family concerns. Stewart Friedman (2008) asserts that the metaphor of "work-life balance" implies that we have to make tradeoffs between the two, thereby resulting in a zero sum game. Friedman (2008) suggests an alternate approach that we instead integrate our work, community, family, and self domains to "find the potential for each part to produce success in others." The synergy available by integrated domains is tremendous,

but integrating domains is very rarely even considered an option in the workplace. Ulrich (1998) further emphasizes the importance of managing intellectual capital as a business priority, stating that “intellectual capital is the most important business issue.”

## Synthesis of Research

### Intellectual Capital and Talent Management

There are many terms throughout current literature that refer to this topic of intellectual capital. Terms such as human capital, talent, intellectual capital, and human resources are often used interchangeably without explicitly defining what these terms are meant in context. Ulrich (1998) offers a tangible model for defining intellectual capital as the level of competence of employees multiplied by the level of commitment of employees.

$$\boxed{\text{Intellectual Capital} = \text{Competence} \times \text{Commitment} \text{ (Ulrich, 1998)}}$$

This researcher found this definition to be the most comprehensive approach to explaining what intellectual capital is and what its value is to an organization. By exploring Ulrich's (1998) definition further, it becomes clear that in order to successfully appreciate the organizational asset of intellectual capital, organizations must take actions to positively impact both variables (competence and commitment). Organizations with high competence but low commitment have talented employees who can't get things done; organizations with low competence but high commitment have less-talented employees who get things done quickly (Ulrich, 1998). Both of these types of organizations create a culture that is detrimental to the long-term success of the organization. Consequently, the goal is to have an organization with high competence and high commitment to facilitate long-term success.

A benefit of Ulrich's (1998) model of intellectual capital is that it can be used in a quantitative analysis of the level of intellectual capital in a particular business unit as a leading indicator of future success. For example, a restaurant chain could use the model to evaluate the level of intellectual capital at each of its restaurants. The average skill level of employees at each restaurant (competence) multiplied by the average retention of the same employees (commitment) would create an index that the restaurant senior management could use to predict positive results in the areas of customer loyalty, productivity, and profitability (Ulrich, 1998). Whether Ulrich's (1998) model is used quantitatively or qualitatively, it provides the key insight into what two areas must be addressed in the foundation of any talent management program to be successful.

In a 2001 McKinsey survey, only 14 percent of 6,900 executives surveyed agreed that their companies attracted highly talented people (Axelrod, 2001). An earlier McKinsey survey in 1998 showed that only 10 percent of 6,000 executives thought that they retain almost all of their high performers (Chamber, 1998). Even more concerning is that only 16 percent of these executives thought their company even knew who their high performers were (Chambers, 1998). While managing highly talented individuals is important, it is equally important to purge low-performing employees from the workforce. Of the 6,900 executives surveyed, only 3 percent say their organizations developed people effectively while quickly removing low performers from their companies (Axelrod, 2001). These results coupled with a drop in supply of 35 to 44 year olds in the United States by 15 percent from 2000 to 2015 indicate that "superior talent will be tomorrow's prime source of competitive advantage" (Chambers, 1998). In order to sustain effectiveness and positive business results, organizations must institute talent management programs that address Ulrich's two tenets of competence and commitment.

Some top industry leaders have recognized this need and are making talent management an urgent priority (Chambers, 1998). Allied Signal's CEO Larry Bossidy asserts that "At the end of the day, we bet on people, not strategies." When Jack Welch met with Home Depot to share insights into GE's approach to growth, he took two human resources executives along to explain GE's human resource strategy (Chambers, 1998). Dick Vague, CEO of First USA, stressed the importance of talent management, stating, "If it's the most important thing, your calendar reflects it. I have been personally involved in hiring everyone in the top management group, and many three or four levels below that." The Secretary of the Army also expressed his recognition of an urgent need for a robust talent management program in his "Army Civilian Corps Champion" Memorandum of September 2007 (AUSA ILW, 2008). The Secretary of the Army designated himself as Army Civilian Corps Champion and committed himself and the Army Chief of staff to "maximizing the development of the Civilian workforce and transforming the systems and structures that provide its support" (AUSA ILW, 2008).

The importance of effective talent management traces its roots to the emergence of knowledge worker. A knowledge worker is defined as an individual who is valued for his/her ability to interpret information within a specific subject area (Drucker, 2002). Knowledge workers often advance the overall understanding of that subject area through analysis, design, and development. Knowledge workers are fueled by expertise, insight, and research skills. Knowledge workers use these skills to define problems, identify alternatives, and implement solutions in an effort to influence organization decisions, priorities, and strategies. Peter Drucker (2002) highlighted the qualitative difference between knowledge workers and less-skilled workers: "In a traditional workforce, the workforce serves the system; in a knowledge based workforce the system must serve the worker (Drucker, 2002)."

In the current economic downturn, effective talent management is even more critical. As organizations employing knowledge-based workers are operating with leaner staffs, “if you lose anyone [going forward] it will probably be a key player (Stuart, 2009).” Alex Stuart (2009) asserts that it is absolutely critical during this time and into the economic recovery for executives to concentrate on winning the loyalty and commitment of their remaining staff. In the finance industry, losing an employee to a competitor during the current recession is both a business disruption and financial hit on the company since staff replacement costs around 120 percent to 130 percent of the salary of the person who leaves (Stuart, 2009). As demonstrated by the examples provided, current literature consistently asserts that organizations who make implementing a talent management strategy a priority for their organization realize significant competitive advantage. The highest-ranked companies in financial performance were those that implemented a coordinated talent management strategy as one of the top three priorities of their senior leaders (Axelrod, 2001).

### **Human Resources Practices for Talent Management**

Organizations developing these comprehensive strategies for talent management must ensure they address increasing both levels of competence and commitment in their employees. Ulrich (1998) recommends five tools for increasing competence within a business unit; he also notes that using all five tools collectively ensures a balanced flow of competence. These tools are to buy, build, borrow, bounce, or bind confidence to facilitate appreciation of intellectual capital (Ulrich, 1998).

#### **Buy**

Using a buy strategy to build competence means the manager seeks to replace current talent with higher quality talent from outside his or her immediate organization. This could be to other business units, or outside the organization completely. A buy strategy works when outside

talent is readily available, but it has significant risks. Some of the risks are that the outside talent may not be better or more qualified than inside talent, that internal qualified employees who remain may become resentful of management for going outside, or that the outside talent may not successfully integrate into a team that can successfully work the business (Ulrich, 1998).

### **Build**

Managers can employ a build strategy by investing in the current workforce to make it stronger and better. Drucker (2002) advocates this approach, stating that organizations should manage their knowledge workers to gain greater productivity by making “ordinary people do extraordinary things.” This strategy works best when development and training is closely linked to practical business results and action learning instead of theory; the risk associated with this strategy is that an organization may spend tremendous resources of time and money on training for the sake of training without ever adding value to intellectual capital (Ulrich, 1998).

### **Borrow**

A borrow strategy involves managers forming external partnerships to bring in ideas, tools, or frameworks that make the organization better. This is typically done through the use of consultants. One benefit of this strategy is that long standing units or organizations may be too involved with the bureaucracy and culture of their organization to see all the different angles from which a problem can be approached. Consultants can bring a fresh perspective to a stagnant organization to make it stronger; the risk in using a borrow strategy is that the organization may become completely dependent on consultants instead of using the consultants as a spark to improve the organization (Ulrich, 1998).

### **Bounce**

In bouncing, managers employ a strategy to remove employees who do not perform to standard. Sometimes, people who were once qualified fail to add or develop new skills, thereby,

ultimately becoming unqualified for the current work. Additionally, some individuals may simply end up being unable to adapt or change to support new business practices or strategies. The risks associated with this tool are that organizations may bounce the wrong individuals or that those left may end up with low morale (Ulrich, 1998).

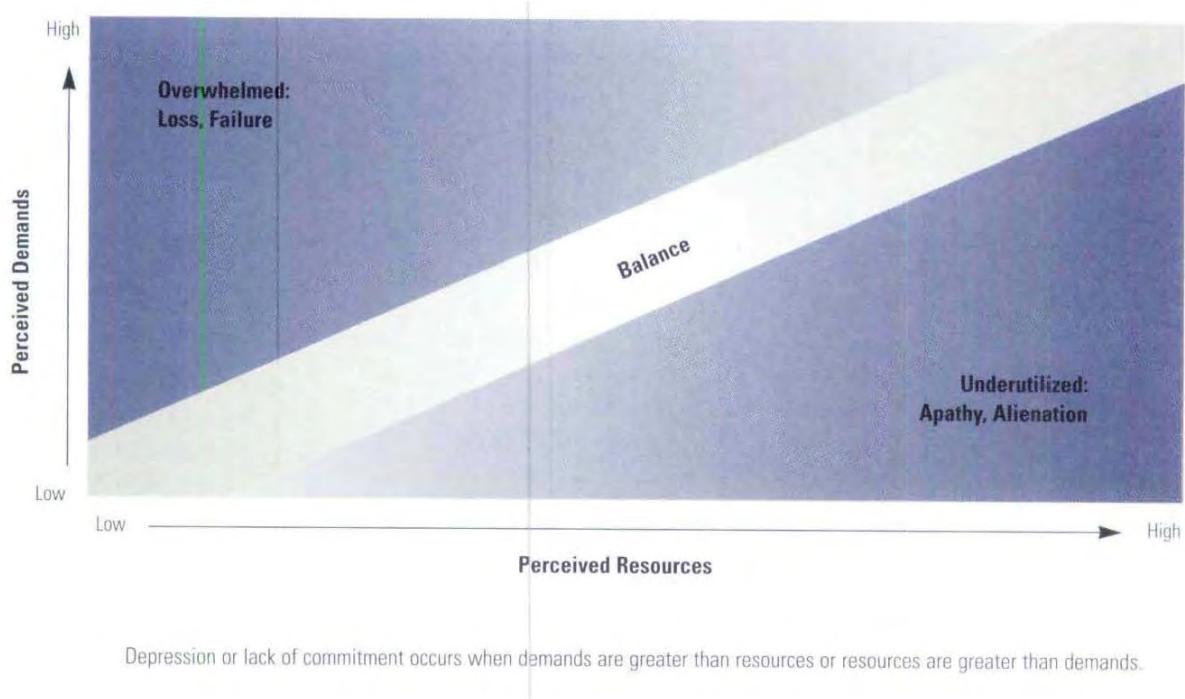
### **Bind**

Ulrich's fifth tool is to bind, which means to retain the most talented employees at all levels. It is critical to keep the right senior managers with vision, direction, and competence; and retaining technical, operational, and hourly workers is equally critical. This is because organizational investments in individuals often take years to pay back, so losing those with the most talent at any level is unacceptable under the bind strategy (Ulrich, 1998). The most challenging task in using the bind principle is in identifying who the most talented individuals are in the organization.

### **Developing Commitment**

Ulrich (1998) asserts that actions needed to develop an increased level of employee commitment can be broken down into two areas as either increasing resources or decreasing demands. As Figure 1 shows, there is a balanced zone where perceived demands and perceived resources are in concert. If these two areas fall out of balance with greater demands than resources, then employees feel overwhelmed and that failure is inevitable, therefore reducing their commitment. If resources are greater than demands, then employees feel underutilized and turn apathetic resulting in a reduced commitment as well. Thus, the key to steadily gain commitment is to apply resources to meet the level of demands, but not exceed what is required. If already in a state of strong commitment, then managers need to ensure that resources and demands stay in balance to sustain the level of commitment of their employees.

**Figure 1. Employee Lack of Commitment (Ulrich, 1998)**



Ulrich (1998) states that efforts to reduce demands to gain or sustain commitment should be focused on prioritizing to eliminate some demands; improving employee focus by ending multiple initiatives and focusing on doing a few things well; and by re-engineering the work by streamlining, automating, and simplifying work. Figure 2 outlines areas where managers should target efforts to increase resources in order to develop commitment: Control, Strategy or Vision, Challenging Work, Collaboration or Teamwork, Work Culture, Shared Gains, Communication, Concern for People, Technology, and Training and Development.

**Figure 2. Tools for Developing Commitment – Increasing Resources (Ulrich, 1998)**



Mathis (2008) proposes we view talent management as a bridge, as shown in Figure 3.

Talent management activities are the way to ensure those individuals who were recruited are retained as high-performing intellectual capital (Mathis, 2008). The talent management activities along this bridge included training, individual career planning, and human resource development activities. Succession planning is also a key part of a successful program; this planning involves organizations identifying future workforce requirements and what candidates will fill those requirements. Throughout the entire talent management process, effective performance management processes are critical (Mathis, 2008). Many organizations have implemented talent management programs, but due to the diverse areas included in the programs, they were not well-integrated. Pitney-Bowes is an example of a company that had training, development, succession planning, and performance management efforts in place for years, but these activities were not linked. Pitney-Bowes now uses an integrated software system as a means to implement

a coordinated talent management program instead of disjointed human resource activities (Mathis, 2008).

**Figure 3. Talent Management Bridge (Mathis, 2008)**



Mathis (2008) also highlights some recent trends in the scope of company talent management programs. Two areas regarding the design of talent management programs best describe the differences in how organizations approach talent management. First, some companies have decided to target specific jobs as the focus of talent management, but other companies take a more broad approach. Additionally, other companies target only high-potential employees, often limiting intensive talent management to the top 10 percent of employees. The benefit of both of these approaches is that they reduce the time burden on management in administering talent management programs. However, the risks of limiting talent management programs to only smaller groups in the organization are high. For example, individuals who do not fall in the targeted jobs or high-potential categories may see their career opportunities as being limited and seek employment elsewhere. Drucker (2002) argues that “the only way to achieve leadership in the knowledge-based business is to spend time with the promising knowledge professionals; to get to know them and to be known by them; to mentor them and to listen to them; to challenge them and to encourage them.” This suggests use of a broad talent

management program across the organization as a preferred approach. Ulrich's (1998) model also suggests a broad program as a preferred approach as a targeted model would most likely demoralize those outside the target areas and reduce overall commitment of these employees. Stuart's (2009) point that in the current economic downturn, almost all employees left are "key player[s]" also suggests that an organization-wide approach is the preferred method for implementation of a talent management program.

### **What Motivates Talent?**

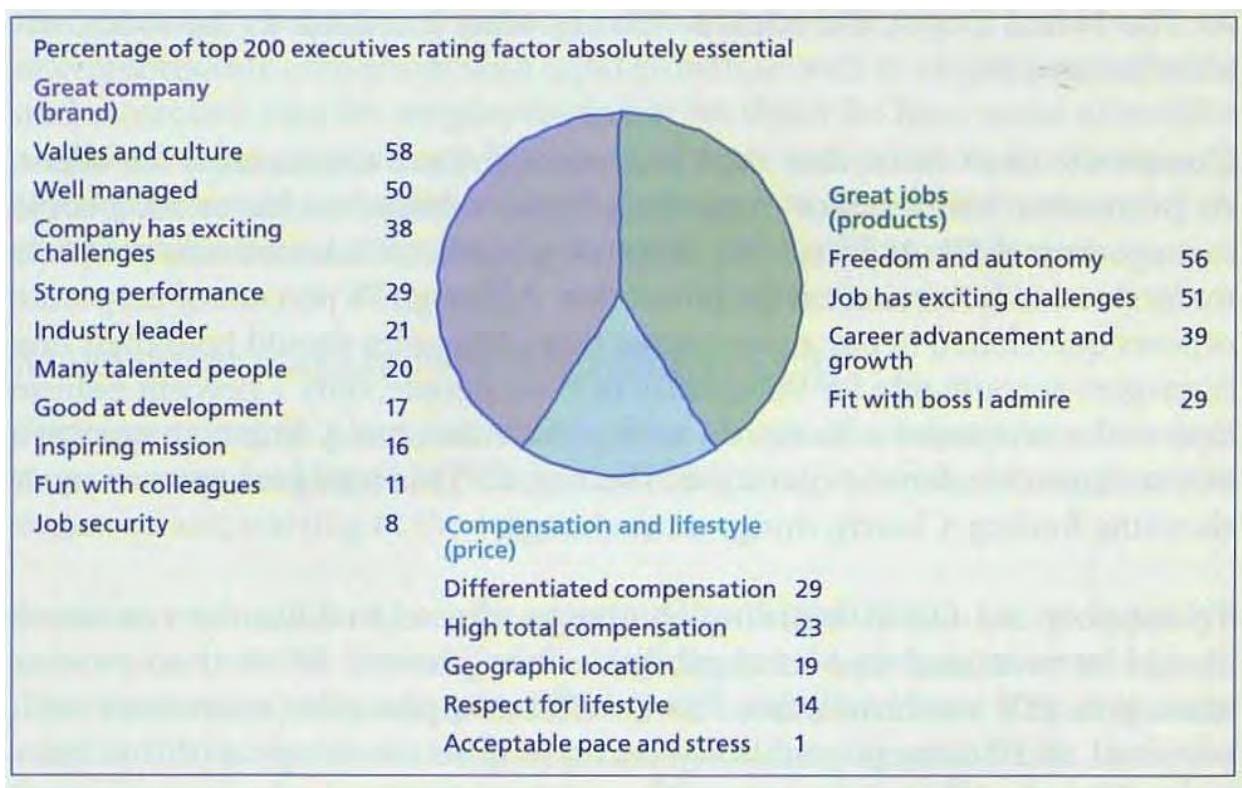
Several studies have been conducted in an effort to determine which characteristics of a talent management program are most valued by employees. McKinsey & Company, Inc. conducted a study of over 6,000 executives in 77 large U.S. companies by Chambers (1998) and a follow-up study of 6,900 executives in 56 large and midsize U.S. companies by Axelrod (2001). Additionally, Holtshouse (2009) conducted a study of 125 knowledge work professionals and executives. Three quarters of Holtshouse's (2009) respondents were from North America and one quarter was from Europe and South America.

The first McKinsey study found that there were four distinct value proposition segments of employees (Chambers, 1998). The first value proposition segment was "Go with a winner," where executives sought growth and advancement in a very successful company; these individuals were less concerned with mission and location. The next value proposition segment was "Big Risk, Big Reward," where individuals valued compensation and career advancement over company success or involvement in their personal development. The third segment was "Save the world," where executives demanded inspiration, vision, and exciting challenges; compensation and personal development were less important for this segment. The final segment was "Lifestyle," where individuals were most interested in flexibility in dealing with lifestyle

choices, geographic location, and compatibility with their supervisor than they were with company growth and excitement (Chamber, 1998).

In Figure 4, we see a further analysis of these segments focused on the top 200 executives surveyed. These top 200 executives were re-segmented into three groups based on their responses: Great Company, Great Jobs, and Compensation and Lifestyle (Chambers, 1998). Figure 4 shows that the majority of these top 200 were more motivated by working for a great company or having a great job than by compensation and lifestyle concerns. Stuart (2009) cites Chris Rice, CEO of human-resourcing consulting firm Blessing White, “The biggest driver of satisfaction is not free bagels, and not even your compensation, but providing more opportunities for people to do what they do best.”

**Figure 4. McKinsey Study - What Motivates Talent? (Chambers, 1998)**



As shown in Figure 4, there are multiple ways that talent can be segmented and targeted. Chambers (1998) ultimately found that the most successful companies tended to focus on a

particular talent segment, while weaker organizations recruited a bit of every segment. To be most effective, organizations should determine what motivation-type of employees they are looking for, and ensure that the company brand is tailored to best attract that talent segment (Chambers, 1998).

Holtshouse's (2009) study looked at two different age groups of knowledge workers, those just starting in the workplace (25 years or younger) and a more experienced group from 26 to 40 years old. Executives and professionals indicated that their organizations planned to promote and advertise their organizational advantages to attract and recruit talent to meet their future workforce needs. As shown in Figure 5, the top recruiting strategy, selected by both groups, was an emphasis on flex telework or telecommute programs (Holtshouse, 2009). This reflects the most current trends and the era of the mobile workforce. Mathis (2008) reinforces this trend stating, "rather than letting jobs define [workers] lives, more people set goals for the types of lives they want and use jobs to meet those goals."

**Figure 5. Organizational Advantages for Recruiting Knowledge Workers  
(Holtshouse, 2009)**

Organizational Advantages for Recruiting Knowledge Workers	
Top Ten for 25 yr olds	
1	Flex telework/telecommute
2	Cultural diversity/empathy
3	Integrated life/work programs
4	Mentor/coaching programs
5	Advanced degree programs
6	Ethical culture
7	Job security
8	Personal services
9	Eco/green initiatives
10	Community service programs
Top Ten for 26-40 yr olds	
1	Flex telework/telecommute
2	Job security
3	Integrated life/work programs
4	Personal services
5	Cultural diversity/empathy
6	Ethical culture
7	Advanced degree programs
8	Mentor/coaching programs
9	Community service programs
10	Eco/green initiatives

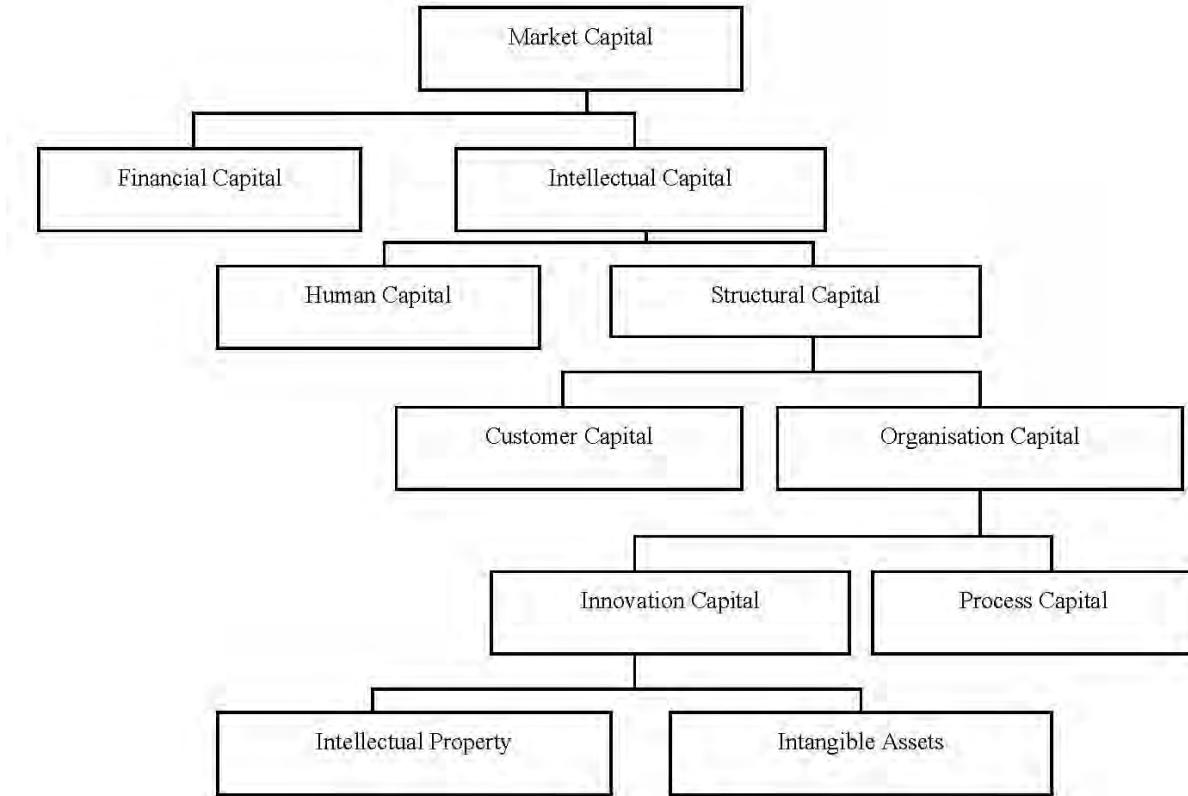
Holtshouse's (2009) study then showed clear differences between the two groups shown in Figure 5. Younger workers placed cultural diversity as the second most important recruiting advantage to promote. This shows the next-generation workers awareness of the benefits

provided by a diverse, multi-cultural workforce. Other strategies that were priorities for younger workers were integrated life/work programs, mentor/coaching programs, and advanced degree support programs. These show that opportunities for personal growth and development are important in recruiting next-generation workers. For more experienced workers, from 26 to 40 years old, the second most important recruiting advantage was job security. This likely shows the impact of the current economic downturn and the importance of home and family life to this more experienced group. Other key advantages to promote to recruit this group were integrated life/work programs, personal services (availability at the workplace), cultural diversity, an ethical culture, mentor/coaching programs, community service programs, and eco/green initiatives (Holtshouse, 2009).

### **Competing Perspectives**

A competing perspective to Ulrich's (1998) model is offered by Renu Burr. Burr (2002) argues that intellectual capital is more than an interaction between competence and commitment. Burr (2002) proposes an alternate model of market capital, as shown in Figure 6. In this figure, intellectual capital is broken down into human capital and structural capital. Under this construct, talent development would be focused on developing human capital portion of intellectual capital. Burr (2002) also proposes an extension to Ulrich's (1998) model that intellectual capital equals competence multiplied by commitment multiplied by control, as shown in Figure 7.

**Figure 6. Components of Market Capital (Burr, 2002).**



**Figure 7. Proposed Extended Model of Intellectual Capital (Burr, 2002).**

Proposition 4:  $\text{Intellectual Capital} = \text{Competence} \times \text{Commitment} \times \text{Control}$

In which:

Competence = Rationalist measures of capacity (KSAs), interpretative measures (skill utilisation) and cognitions of capability (efficacy beliefs);

Commitment = Affective, continuance and normative commitment; and

Control = Work autonomy.

This researcher believes that the addition of the variable of “control” into the intellectual capital equation that Burr (2002) suggests in his alternate model is not necessary since Ulrich

(1998) includes control as a tool to influence the level of commitment of employees. Nevertheless, the variations in the models would not significantly skew the results of this research project, which is focused primarily on motivating behavior instead of establishing validation of one particular model. Ulrich's (1998) model was chosen to frame the terminology of intellectual capital in congruence with literature. If an alternate model such as Burr's were used, this researcher asserts that similar results could be expected.

## **Conclusion of Research**

This researcher concludes that the predominant current literature asserts the importance and criticality of properly managing intellectual capital as a business concern. Whether an organization is a private entity, a public company, or a government organization, intellectual capital is the only appreciable asset. Those organizations that implement effective, integrated talent management programs benefit from competitive advantage in the market. These same benefits of improved productivity and results can be realized by the AAC workforce through the use of a well-tuned talent management program that is targeted to recruit and retain the types of workers desired for the acquisition workforce. Identifying the characteristics and motivations of the desired workforce is the most challenging task for any organization, but it is critical. Without a proper focused recruit/retain strategy, organizations will end up with a workforce with extremely divergent motivations and will struggle in implementing talent management programs that address workforce needs in a way that increases employees' level of commitment. The adage "if you try to please everyone, you end up pleasing no one" is applicable to a divergent workforce with different workplace motivations. For example, if you recruit an employee who is focused on "Big Risk, Big Reward," then they will not be happy with a strategy that institutes individual development plans as a key part of talent management. Consequently, this research project endeavors to assist the AAC in identifying the predominant motivations of its GS-12/GS-

13 workforce so it can best determine which organizational advantages the AAC desires to establish as its primary brand image.

## **CHAPTER 3** **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

Several research studies have investigated the practices and effectiveness of managing intellectual capital and talent development in the commercial sector (Chambers, 1998 and Holtshouse, 2009). This research project will conduct a similar study in the government sector, specifically the AAC workforce, comparing the results to the commercial sector studies to gain further insight into which commercial practices can best be applied to improve the identification, management, and retention of intellectual and technological talent to effectively support the 21<sup>st</sup> century U.S. Army's ability to successfully execute full spectrum operations.

### **Research Design**

This research project followed an applied research methodology. Research performed is of the descriptive category. This researcher collected qualitative data through the use of surveys with target population, reviewed current survey instruments available for applicability, and prepared a pilot study survey tailored around results from similar surveys discovered through the literature review.

### **Research Questions**

The primary research question of this research project is: Are existing AAC workforce intellectual capital and talent development practices currently in place effective in identifying, managing, sustaining, and retaining the Army's intellectual and technological talent at GS-12/13 level?

Secondary and supporting research questions that will be investigated are: What intellectual capital and talent development management practices are valued by employees in the

AAC workforce at the GS-12/13 level? Which intellectual capital and talent development management practices are used in the AAC?

### **Research Hypothesis**

This researcher's hypothesis is that AAC organizations do not effectively apply intellectual capital and talent development practices to successfully identify, sustain, and retain Army acquisition intellectual and technological talent at the GS-12/13 level.

### **Subject, Participants, Population, and Sample**

The target population will be Army acquisition workforce employees at the GS-12/GS-13 or NSPS Pay Band Level 2 performing work at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama; Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland; and Detroit Arsenal, Michigan.

### **Research Instrument and Data Collection**

One instrument was used in this study. The target population of GS-12/GS-13 AAC workforce employees were surveyed using an online Likert scale survey and three open form questions, as shown in Appendix A. The online survey was projected to take 15 minutes in duration to complete. Data from the online survey was collected and stored electronically on a Defense Acquisition University (DAU)-owned computer. All survey responses were anonymous for individuals.

### **Setting and Environment**

The setting for this study was at the target population's workplace computer during duty hours. This provided adequate time for respondents to complete the 15 minute survey.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Content validity was ensured through the use of peer scrutiny of the data. This researcher collaborated with another DAU Senior Service College Fellow in analyzing the data to minimize researcher bias and ensure validity.

This study was considered a pilot study and, therefore, reliability will not be addressed in this initial study. Nevertheless, in Chapter 5, study data is compared to study results addressed in the literature review to generally assess reliability in comparison to these previous studies.

## **Summary**

A qualitative design was used as a framework for this study investigating how effectively the AAC applies intellectual capital and talent development practices to successfully identify, sustain, and retain Army acquisition intellectual and technological talent at the GS-12/13 level. Chapter 4 discusses the results of this study. The results reflect data collected through online surveys of the target population of GS-12/GS-13 employees of the AAC workforce.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the results from this study. Results are presented in three sections. The first contains the results from the individual Likert scale survey questions comparing the importance to employees of organizational advantages to the availability of these advantages in their organizations. The second section contains the results of the three free-text questions presented in the survey. The final section provides a summary of the results.

#### **Methodology Summary**

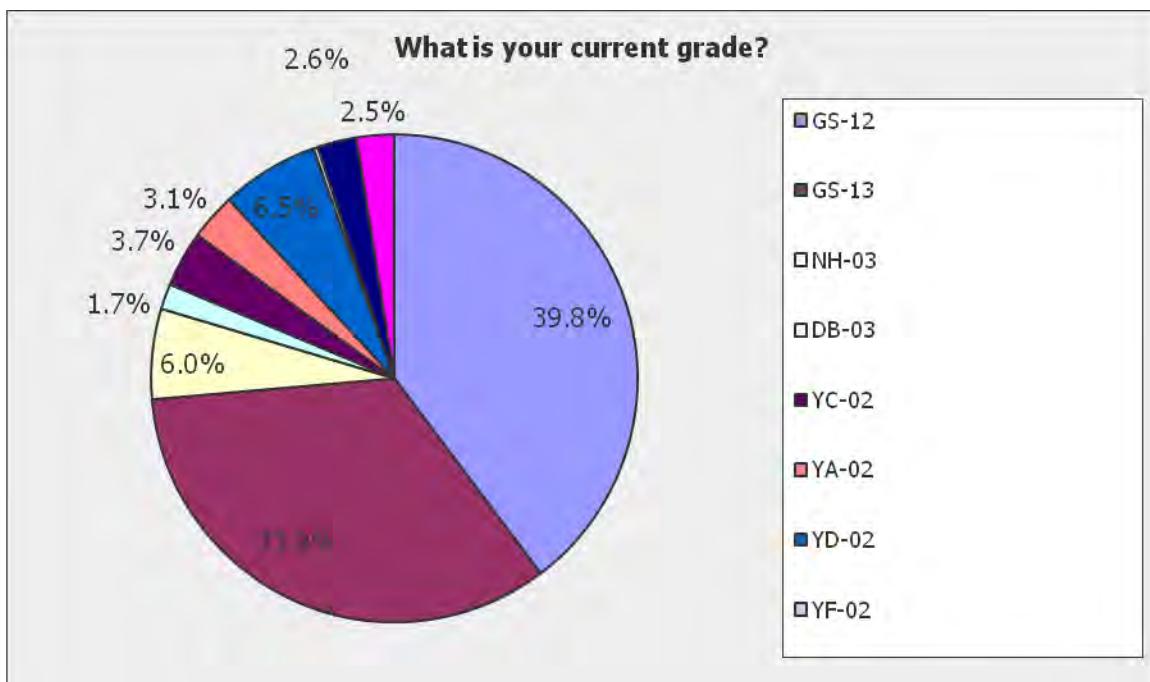
A qualitative design was used as a framework for this study investigating how effectively the AAC applies intellectual capital and talent development practices to successfully identify, sustain, and retain Army acquisition intellectual and technological talent at the GS-12/13 level. Research performed is of the descriptive category. The results reflect data collected through online surveys of the target population of GS-12/GS-13 employees of the AAC workforce.

#### **Populations, Sample, and Participants**

The target population for this study consisted of GS-12/GS-13 employees of the AAC Workforce located at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama; Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland; and Detroit Arsenal, Michigan. This researcher contacted the U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center (USAASC) requesting the e-mail addresses on file for this target population. A link to an online survey was sent to this population of 6,750 individuals. The online survey was open for 30 days, from February 20, 2010, to March 20, 2010. A sample of 652 of this population accessed the survey and completed some portion of the questions. Participants were allowed to skip questions and surveys were allowed to be submitted without all questions answered.

Demographics of the target population sample are shown in Figure 8. The two largest segments of the sample consisted of GS-12s, who comprised 39.8 percent of the sample, and GS-13s, who made up 33.9 percent of the sample. The remaining 26.3 percent of the sample consisted of numerous pay-for-performance demonstrations or the NSPS at the equivalent grade of GS-12/GS-13.

**Figure 8. Civil Service Grade Demographics of Sample**



## Likert Scale Survey Results

The Likert scale survey results are included below in Figure 9 for the 23 organizational advantages that were rated by participants for their importance to the participant and for their availability to the participant in their organization.

**Figure 9. Likert Scale Survey Results**

**Importance to Employee:**

**My organization allows me the opportunity ability to tele-work or tele-commute on a regular scheduled basis.**

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
1.	85 15.2%	138 24.7%	152 27.2%	133 23.8%	50 9.0%	2.87	558
<i>answered question</i>							558
<i>skipped question</i>							94

**Availability to Employee:**

**My organization allows me the opportunity ability to tele-work or tele-commute on a regular scheduled basis.**

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
1.	275 55.6%	100 20.2%	45 9.1%	44 8.9%	31 6.3%	1.90	495
<i>answered question</i>							495
<i>skipped question</i>							157

**Importance to Employee:**

**My organization provides job security.**

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
2.	2 0.4%	5 0.9%	70 12.5%	234 41.9%	248 44.4%	4.29	559
<i>answered question</i>							559
<i>skipped question</i>							93

**Availability to Employee:**

**My organization provides job security.**

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
2.	8 1.6%	8 1.6%	16 3.2%	87 17.5%	378 76.1%	4.65	497
<i>answered question</i>							497
<i>skipped question</i>							155

**Importance to Employee:**

My organization allows me flexibility to integrate my work and life domains with ease.

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
3.	7 1.3%	18 3.2%	147 26.4%	256 46.0%	129 23.2%	3.87	557
						answered question	557
						skipped question	95

**Availability to Employee:**

My organization allows me flexibility to integrate my work and life domains with ease.

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
3.	13 2.6%	26 5.3%	49 9.9%	168 33.9%	239 48.3%	4.20	495
						answered question	495
						skipped question	157

**Importance to Employee:**

My organization ensures that there is availability of personal services (dry cleaning, food services, shopping, etc) at or near my work site.

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
4.	147 26.4%	228 41.0%	114 20.5%	48 8.6%	19 3.4%	2.22	556
						answered question	556
						skipped question	96

**Availability to Employee:**

My organization ensures that there is availability of personal services (dry cleaning, food services, shopping, etc) at or near my work site.

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
4.	147 30.1%	108 22.1%	67 13.7%	101 20.7%	66 13.5%	2.65	489
						answered question	489
						skipped question	163

**Importance to Employee:**

My organization has cultural diversity and empathy.

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
5.	51 9.2%	103 18.6%	238 43.0%	113 20.4%	49 8.8%	3.01	554
						answered question	554
						skipped question	98

**Availability to Employee:**

My organization has cultural diversity and empathy.

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
5.	10 2.0%	24 4.9%	55 11.3%	165 33.8%	234 48.0%	4.21	488
						answered question	488
						skipped question	164

**Importance to Employee:**

My organization has a strong ethical culture.

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
6.	16 2.9%	51 9.2%	164 29.4%	189 33.9%	137 24.6%	3.68	557
						<i>answered question</i>	557
						<i>skipped question</i>	95

**Availability to Employee:**

My organization has a strong ethical culture.

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
6.	7 1.4%	32 6.6%	67 13.8%	165 34.0%	215 44.2%	4.13	486
						<i>answered question</i>	486
						<i>skipped question</i>	166

**Importance to Employee:**

My organization provides time and funding to allow me to pursue advanced degree programs.

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
7.	21 3.8%	64 11.5%	190 34.2%	209 37.6%	72 12.9%	3.44	556
						<i>answered question</i>	556
						<i>skipped question</i>	96

**Availability to Employee:**

My organization provides time and funding to allow me to pursue advanced degree programs.

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
7.	19 3.9%	48 9.8%	59 12.0%	167 33.9%	199 40.4%	3.97	492
						<i>answered question</i>	492
						<i>skipped question</i>	160

**Importance to Employee:**

My organization has a strong formal mentor/coaching program.

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
8.	29 5.2%	96 17.4%	216 39.1%	154 27.8%	58 10.5%	3.21	553
						<i>answered question</i>	553
						<i>skipped question</i>	99

**Availability to Employee:**

My organization has a strong formal mentor/coaching program.

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
8.	65 13.3%	125 25.7%	118 24.2%	122 25.1%	57 11.7%	2.96	487
						<i>answered question</i>	487
						<i>skipped question</i>	165

**Importance to Employee:**

My organization allows me time to support community service programs.

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
9.	63	196	204	71	15	2.60	549
						answered question	549
						skipped question	103

**Availability to Employee:**

My organization allows me time to support community service programs.

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
9.	73	76	125	130	77	3.13	481
						answered question	481
						skipped question	171

**Importance to Employee:**

My organization embraces integrating eco/green initiatives in our day-to-day work.

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
10.	73	163	225	80	13	2.63	554
	13.2%	29.4%	40.6%	14.4%	2.3%		
						answered question	554
						skipped question	98

**Availability to Employee:**

My organization embraces integrating eco/green initiatives in our day-to-day work.

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
10.	58	97	124	155	54	3.10	488
	11.9%	19.9%	25.4%	31.8%	11.1%		
						answered question	488
						skipped question	164

**Importance to Employee:**

My organization is well managed.

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
11.	5	6	89	249	203	4.16	552
						answered question	552
						skipped question	100

**Availability to Employee:**

My organization is well managed.

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
11.	22	62	82	218	109	3.67	493
						answered question	493
						skipped question	159

**Importance to Employee:****My job is a good fit with a boss I admire.**

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
12.	9 1.6%	16 2.9%	142 25.7%	266 48.1%	120 21.7%	3.85	553
						<i>answered question</i>	553
						<i>skipped question</i>	99

**Availability to Employee:****My job is a good fit with a boss I admire.**

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
12.	22 4.5%	48 9.8%	61 12.5%	158 32.3%	200 40.9%	3.95	489
						<i>answered question</i>	489
						<i>skipped question</i>	163

**Importance to Employee:****My organization provides differentiated compensation for top performers.**

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
13.	17 3.1%	41 7.4%	163 29.4%	231 41.7%	102 18.4%	3.65	554
						<i>answered question</i>	554
						<i>skipped question</i>	98

**Availability to Employee:****My organization provides differentiated compensation for top performers.**

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
13.	33 6.8%	74 15.2%	102 20.9%	200 41.0%	79 16.2%	3.45	488
						<i>answered question</i>	488
						<i>skipped question</i>	164

**Importance to Employee:****My organization provides high total compensation.**

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
14.	12 2.2%	32 5.8%	190 34.5%	232 42.1%	85 15.4%	3.63	551
						<i>answered question</i>	551
						<i>skipped question</i>	101

**Availability to Employee:****My organization provides high total compensation.**

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
14.	20 4.1%	64 13.1%	93 19.1%	201 41.2%	111 22.7%	3.66	488
						<i>answered question</i>	488
						<i>skipped question</i>	164

**Importance to Employee:****My job has an acceptable pace and level of stress.**

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
15.	8 1.4%	15 2.7%	168 30.4%	282 51.0%	80 14.5%	3.74	553
						<i>answered question</i>	553
						<i>skipped question</i>	99

**Availability to Employee:****My job has an acceptable pace and level of stress.**

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
15.	18 3.7%	48 9.8%	63 12.9%	214 43.9%	145 29.7%	3.86	488
						<i>answered question</i>	488
						<i>skipped question</i>	164

**Importance to Employee:****My organization is good at employee development.**

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
16.	8 1.5%	20 3.6%	159 28.9%	259 47.1%	104 18.9%	3.78	550
						<i>answered question</i>	550
						<i>skipped question</i>	102

**Availability to Employee:****My organization is good at employee development.**

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
16.	25 5.1%	77 15.8%	92 18.9%	183 37.5%	111 22.7%	3.57	488
						<i>answered question</i>	488
						<i>skipped question</i>	164

**Importance to Employee:****In my job, I am able to have fun with colleagues.**

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
17.	13 2.4%	66 12.1%	201 36.7%	197 36.0%	70 12.8%	3.45	547
						<i>answered question</i>	547
						<i>skipped question</i>	105

**Availability to Employee:****In my job, I am able to have fun with colleagues.**

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
17.	6 1.2%	36 7.3%	88 17.9%	213 43.4%	148 30.1%	3.94	491
						<i>answered question</i>	491
						<i>skipped question</i>	161

**Importance to Employee:****My organization has many talented people.**

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
18.	3 0.5%	16 2.9%	182 32.9%	269 48.6%	83 15.0%	3.75	553
<i>answered question</i>							553
<i>skipped question</i>							99

**Availability to Employee:****My organization has many talented people.**

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
18.	7 1.4%	22 4.5%	59 12.0%	214 43.4%	191 38.7%	4.14	493
<i>answered question</i>							493
<i>skipped question</i>							159

**Importance to Employee:****My organization has an inspiring mission.**

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
19.	11 2.0%	20 3.6%	183 33.1%	244 44.1%	95 17.2%	3.71	553
<i>answered question</i>							553
<i>skipped question</i>							99

**Availability to Employee:****My organization has an inspiring mission.**

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
19.	9 1.8%	27 5.5%	44 9.0%	177 36.2%	232 47.4%	4.22	489
<i>answered question</i>							489
<i>skipped question</i>							163

**Importance to Employee:****My organization has exciting challenges.**

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
20.	7 1.3%	30 5.5%	191 35.0%	247 45.2%	71 13.0%	3.63	546
<i>answered question</i>							546
<i>skipped question</i>							106

**Availability to Employee:****My organization has exciting challenges.**

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
20.	9 1.8%	38 7.8%	74 15.1%	199 40.6%	170 34.7%	3.99	490
<i>answered question</i>							490
<i>skipped question</i>							162

**Importance to Employee:****My job has freedom and autonomy.**

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
21.	6 1.1%	20 3.6%	185 33.5%	241 43.6%	101 18.3%	3.74	553
						<i>answered question</i>	553
						<i>skipped question</i>	99

**Availability to Employee:****My job has freedom and autonomy.**

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
21.	16 3.3%	40 8.1%	84 17.1%	204 41.5%	147 29.9%	3.87	491
						<i>answered question</i>	491
						<i>skipped question</i>	161

**Importance to Employee:****My organization provides opportunities for career advancement and growth.**

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
22.	9 1.6%	10 1.8%	100 18.1%	252 45.7%	181 32.8%	4.06	552
						<i>answered question</i>	552
						<i>skipped question</i>	100

**Availability to Employee:****My organization provides opportunities for career advancement and growth.**

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
22.	14 2.9%	59 12.1%	95 19.4%	177 36.2%	144 29.4%	3.77	489
						<i>answered question</i>	489
						<i>skipped question</i>	163

**Importance to Employee:****My organization respects my time and work doesn't conflict with my lifestyle.**

Answer Options	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	Rating Average	Response Count
23.	7 1.3%	38 6.9%	202 36.6%	224 40.6%	81 14.7%	3.61	552
						<i>answered question</i>	552
						<i>skipped question</i>	100

**Availability to Employee:****My organization respects my time and work doesn't conflict with my lifestyle.**

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Every Once in Awhile	Sometimes	Almost Always	Rating Average	Response Count
23.	11 2.2%	33 6.7%	83 16.9%	190 38.6%	175 35.6%	3.99	492
						<i>answered question</i>	492
						<i>skipped question</i>	160

**Open-Ended Question Results**

Three open-ended questions were asked. The first question was: “What are your senior leader’s (first Senior Executive Service [SES] civilian or general officer in your chain of leadership) top three leadership priorities?” Out of the 361 participants who responded to this

question, 147 (40.7 percent) stated they did not know what their senior leaders priorities were. 214 out of 361 (59.3 percent) responded with their senior leaders priorities. Of these 214 who responded with senior leader priorities, 95 (26.3 percent of respondents) included a talent management or intellectual capital priority among their senior leader's top three priorities.

The second question was: "What are the top five reasons you chose to accept a job or stay in a job in an organization?" There were 392 participants who responded to this question. Using a data mining tool (Microsoft Word Auto-summarize) to analyze 29 pages of responses and limiting the summary to 500 words produced the following results: There were 92 instances that respondents cited "Job Security." There were 65 instances where "Type of Work" or "Challenging Work" was indicated. There were 24 times when "Pay" was identified. There were 20 instances when the "Work/Life Balance" was indicated, and 18 times when "Work Environment" was entered. This indicates that the top five recruitment or retention reasons (in order of importance) of participants were: job security, challenging work, pay, work/life balance, and work environment.

The final question was: "Which of the current Army Acquisition Corps talent management practices are most effective in your organization?" There were 322 participants who responded to this question, and 161 (50 percent) of those stated that either "they did not know" or "they did not know what talent management practices were." This researcher's assessment of these results is that the question was poorly worded, as AAC does not use the words "talent management" in its regular workforce publications so the question itself was confusing. Due to the confusion of participants on the meaning of the question, the responses other than "don't know" were widely varied and inconsistent. As a result, this researcher concludes that responses to this question lack validity and reliability and therefore will not be further analyzed in this study.

## **Summary of Results**

The results are summarized by comparing the most important organizational advantages to employees to the availability of those advantages in the organization. The following three figures provide the summary data.

**Figure 10. Organizational Advantages Ranked by Importance**

Rank	Organizational Advantage	Importance to Employee
1	My organization provides job security.	4.29
2	My organization is well managed.	4.16
3	My organization provides opportunities for career advancement and growth.	4.06
4	My organization allows me flexibility to integrate my work and life domains with ease.	3.87
5	My job is a good fit with a boss I admire.	3.85
6	My organization is good at employee development.	3.78
7	My organization has many talented people.	3.75
8	My job has an acceptable pace and level of stress.	3.74
9	My job has freedom and autonomy.	3.74
10	My organization has an inspiring mission.	3.71
11	My organization has a strong ethical culture.	3.68
12	My organization provides differentiated compensation for top performers.	3.65
13	My organization provides high total compensation.	3.63
14	My organization has exciting challenges.	3.63
15	My organization respects my time and work doesn't conflict with my lifestyle.	3.61
16	In my job, I am able to have fun with colleagues.	3.45
17	My organization provides time and funding to allow me to pursue advanced degree programs.	3.44
18	My organization has a strong formal mentor/coaching program.	3.21
19	My organization has cultural diversity and empathy.	3.01
20	My organization allows me the opportunity ability to tele-work or tele-commute on a regular scheduled basis.	2.87
21	My organization embraces integrating eco/green initiatives in our day-to-day work.	2.63
22	My organization allows me time to support community service programs.	2.60
23	My organization ensures that there is availability of personal services (dry cleaning, food services, shopping, etc) at or near my work site.	2.22

Figure 10 shows a summary of the Likert scale results ranked by level of importance to the employee. The results show that the six most important organizational advantages to employees in this sample were: job security, good management, opportunities for career advancement and growth, flexibility to integrate work/life domains, good job fit with compatibility with their boss, and good employee development.

**Figure 11. Organizational Advantages Ranked by Availability**

Rank	Organizational Advantage	Availability to Employee
1	My organization provides job security.	4.65
2	My organization has an inspiring mission.	4.22
3	My organization has cultural diversity and empathy.	4.21
4	My organization allows me flexibility to integrate my work and life domains with ease.	4.20
5	My organization has many talented people.	4.14
6	My organization has a strong ethical culture.	4.13
7	My organization has exciting challenges.	3.99
8	My organization respects my time and work doesn't conflict with my lifestyle.	3.99
9	My organization provides time and funding to allow me to pursue advanced degree programs.	3.97
10	My job is a good fit with a boss I admire.	3.95
11	In my job, I am able to have fun with colleagues.	3.94
12	My job has freedom and autonomy.	3.87
13	My job has an acceptable pace and level of stress.	3.86
14	My organization provides opportunities for career advancement and growth.	3.77
15	My organization is well managed.	3.67
16	My organization provides high total compensation.	3.66
17	My organization is good at employee development.	3.57
18	My organization provides differentiated compensation for top performers.	3.45
19	My organization allows me time to support community service programs.	3.13
20	My organization embraces integrating eco/green initiatives in our day-to-day work.	3.10
21	My organization has a strong formal mentor/coaching program.	2.96
22	My organization ensures that there is availability of personal services (dry cleaning, food services, shopping, etc) at or near my work site.	2.65
23	My organization allows me the opportunity ability to tele-work or tele-commute on a regular scheduled basis.	1.90

Figure 11 shows a summary of the Likert scale results ranked by level of availability to the employee. The results show that the six most available organizational advantages to employees in this sample were: job security, an inspiring vision, cultural diversity and empathy, flexibility to integrate work/life domains, having many talented people in the organization, and a strong ethical culture.

**Figure 12. Organizational Advantages Ranked by Importance Compared to Availability**

Organizational Advantage	Importance to Employee (Likert Score)	Availability to Employee (Likert Score)	Difference
My organization provides job security.	4.29	4.65	0.36
My organization is well managed.	4.16	3.67	-0.49
My organization provides opportunities for career advancement and growth.	4.06	3.77	-0.29
My organization allows me flexibility to integrate my work and life domains with ease.	3.87	4.20	0.33
My job is a good fit with a boss I admire.	3.85	3.95	0.10
My organization is good at employee development.	3.78	3.57	-0.21
My organization has many talented people.	3.75	4.14	0.39
My job has an acceptable pace and level of stress.	3.74	3.86	0.12
My job has freedom and autonomy.	3.74	3.87	0.13
My organization has an inspiring mission.	3.71	4.22	0.51
My organization has a strong ethical culture.	3.68	4.13	0.45
My organization provides differentiated compensation for top performers.	3.65	3.45	-0.20
My organization provides high total compensation.	3.63	3.66	0.03
My organization has exciting challenges.	3.63	3.99	0.36
My organization respects my time and work doesn't conflict with my lifestyle.	3.61	3.99	0.38
In my job, I am able to have fun with colleagues.	3.45	3.94	0.49
My organization provides time and funding to allow me to pursue advanced degree programs.	3.44	3.97	0.53
My organization has a strong formal mentor/coaching program.	3.21	2.96	-0.25
My organization has cultural diversity and empathy.	3.01	4.21	1.20
My organization allows me the opportunity ability to tele-work or tele-commute on a regular scheduled basis.	2.87	1.90	-0.97
My organization embraces integrating eco/green initiatives in our day-to-day work.	2.63	3.10	0.47
My organization allows me time to support community service programs.	2.60	3.13	0.53
My organization ensures that there is availability of personal services (dry cleaning, food services, shopping, etc) at or near my work site.	2.22	2.65	0.43

Figure 12 shows a summary of the Likert scale results ranked by level of importance to the employee compared to availability. Likert scores of importance were subtracted from the Likert score of availability as a means to show what differences exist. Negative difference numbers indicate that the importance of the organizational advantage is not equitably addressed by its availability in the organization. The results show that among the six most important organizational advantages to employees in this sample, three are not available to the level of importance that employees have for them. These three organizational advantages are: good management, opportunities for career advancement and growth, and good employee development.

## **CHAPTER 5** **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Introduction**

In this final chapter, this investigator presents conclusions and study limitations, and identifies some implications for future research. Three conclusions that were derived during this pilot study are: 1) AAC workforce intellectual capital and talent development practices currently in place are partially effective in identifying, managing, sustaining, and retaining the Army's intellectual and technological talent at GS-12/13 level; 2) The commitment and competence levels of AAC employees at the GS-12/13 level can be enhanced by targeting initiatives that focus on the lifestyle/great jobs value segment (job security, good management, work/life flexibility, jobs that are a good fit, opportunities for advancement and growth, and employee development); and 3) AAC organizations spend significant time and energy on creating and improving organizational advantages that are not as valued by employees as other organizational advantages that lack sufficient emphasis by AAC organizations.

### **Interpretation and the Implications of the Research**

The top six organizational advantages cited by participants in the Likert scale survey were: job security, good management, opportunities for career advancement and growth, flexibility to integrate work/life domains, good job fit with compatibility with their boss, and good employee development (See Figure 10). If we categorize these organizational advantages into a specific employee value proposition segment as done in the Chambers' study (1998), then these most closely resemble a mix between the lifestyle and great job" value segments. This suggests that the level of commitment of AAC GS-12/13 employees can be increased by focusing on increasing the availability of these organizational advantages.

Two of these top six also match the Holtshouse (2009) study of 26-40 year olds, which implies some level of reliability of this pilot study. These two organizational advantages were

job security and integrated work/life programs. It is most interesting that telework did not score as one of the top six priorities for employees in this pilot study, but it was the top priority in the Holtshouse (2009) study for 26-40 year olds (See Figure 5). A limitation of this pilot study is that it did not group GS-12/13 employees by age categories as the Holtshouse (2009) study did. Nevertheless, telework did result in the most strongly negative availability vs. importance score of -0.97, indicating that organizations were not making it available in congruence with its level of importance to employees (See Figure 12).

There were also three of the top six organizational advantages that were not available to the degree that they were important to employees resulting in a negative availability vs. importance score, as shown in Figure 12. The three areas requiring increased emphasis to match the level of importance to employees are: good management (-0.49), opportunities for career advancement and growth (-0.29), and good employee development (-.21). Additionally, the open-ended question seeking leader priorities resulted in only 26.3 percent of the population's senior leaders establishing and communicating a leadership priority involving talent or intellectual capital management as one of their top three priorities. The highest-ranked companies in financial performance were those that implemented a coordinated talent management strategy as one of the top three priorities of their senior leaders (Axelrod, 2001). More concerning is that 40.7 percent of GS-12/13s surveyed did not know what their senior leader's priorities were. This suggests that AAC workforce intellectual capital and talent development practices currently in place are only partially effective in identifying, managing, sustaining, and retaining the Army's intellectual and technological talent at GS-12/13 level. Additionally, emphasis on developing and communicating coordinated talent management strategies with AAC organization senior leaders is advisable.

Contrastingly, three areas that were among the top six available organizational advantages that employees did not feel were as important resulting in overly positive availability vs. importance scores were: an inspiring vision (0.51), strong ethical culture (0.45), and cultural diversity and empathy (1.20). This shows that AAC organizations spend significant time and energy on creating and improving organizational advantages that are not as valued by employees as other organizational advantages that lack sufficient emphasis by AAC organizations.

In comparing the Likert scale survey to the open-ended questions, we can also conclude that the sample population's value proposition segment is a lifestyle/great jobs mix. The top five organizational advantages to participants for recruitment or retention were (in order of priority): job security, challenging work, pay, work/life balance, and work environment. All of these match the lifestyle/great jobs criteria except for pay. High total compensation was ranked 13<sup>th</sup> in importance in the Likert scale survey. Despite this one anomaly, the free text data closely matching the Likert scale data demonstrates a level of validity of this pilot study.

### **Limitations of this Pilot Study**

One of the limitations of this study is that it is targeted only those at the GS-12/GS-13 level. This limits the applicability of the study across the more general acquisition workforce. Another limitation is that the study was focused on only populations at three major hubs of the acquisition community where life cycle management commands are located. These hubs are more focused on development, fielding, and sustainment. Consequently, acquiring, testing, and evaluating organizations of the AAC may be underrepresented.

In the interest of keeping the length of survey under 15 minutes, very little demographic data was collected; that limits the analysis of the data to the general GS-12/13 AAC workforce instead of specific generations of that GS-12/13 workforce. Considering the various research on

generational differences and preferences in the workplace, a follow-on study would provide greater insight into generational differences in preferences for organizational advantages.

## **Recommendations for Future Research**

As this was a pilot study designed to capture a general assessment across the GS-12/13-level workforce, additional research would provide further insight and a greater understanding of the overall AAC workforce and their motivating organizational advantages that increase their levels of commitment and competence.

This researcher recommends expanding the research to include interns and GS-14/15 employees of the AAC to determine if the AAC workforce is consistently focused on the lifestyle/great jobs value proposition. A review of recruiting techniques is recommended to validate whether they are consistent with the AAC population to ensure a smooth integration of new employees and ensure their retention.

Additionally, expanding the study's focus on demographics such as age, job series/career field, and location may provide further insight into age/career field/location differences in the importance of specific organizational advantages across the AAC.

Finally, this researcher recommends including SES interviews as to what their assessments of their workforce are regarding organizational advantage preferences and which organizational advantages are more available to their employees. This would provide a compare-and-contrast context to assess whether senior leaders interpretations are in synchronization with their workforce.

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## GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND TERMS

**AAC** – Army Acquisition Corps

**AUSA** – Association of the United States Army

**Competence** – is defined as the skill level of employees (Ulrich, 1998).

**Commitment** – is defined as self-motivation of employees to do good work (Ulrich, 1998).

**FSO** – Full Spectrum Operations

**Full Spectrum Operations (FSO)** – is defined as “Army forces combining offensive, defensive, and stability or civil support operations simultaneously as part of an interdependent joint force to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative, accepting prudent risk to create opportunities to achieve decisive results. They employ synchronized action—lethal and nonlethal—proportional to the mission and informed by a thorough understanding of all variables of the operational environment. Mission command that conveys intent and an appreciation of all aspects of the situation guides the adaptive use of Army forces.” (HQDA, 2008).

**HR** – Human Resources

**Human capital** – is defined as equivalent to the definition of intellectual capital as identified below in the context of this study.

**ILW** – Institute of Land Warfare

**Intellectual capital** – is defined as the level of competence of employees multiplied by the level of commitment of employees in the context of this study (Ulrich, 1998). This definition implies that highly competent employees who are not committed to the organization result in little intellectual capital for the organization. Intellectual capital is synonymous with Talent in the context of this study.

**Knowledge worker** – is defined as an individual who is valued for their ability to interpret information within a specific subject area. Knowledge workers often advance the overall

understanding of that subject area through analysis, design and development (Drucker, 2002).

Knowledge workers are fueled by expertise, insight, and research skills. Knowledge workers use these skills to define problems, identify alternatives, and implement solutions in an effort to influence organization decisions, priorities and strategies.

**Talent** – is defined as equivalent to the definition intellectual capital as identified above in the context of this study.

**Talent development** – is defined as equivalent to the definition of talent management as identified below in the context of this study.

**Talent management** – is the processes and practices of an organization that are focused on enhancing the attraction, development, and retention of key human resources in the organization (Mathis, 2008).

**APPENDIX A**  
**GS-12/GS-13 SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

**1. Which of the following organizational advantages do you feel are most important for recruiting and/or retaining you in an organization?**

a. My organization allows me the opportunity ability to telework or telecommute on a regular scheduled basis.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

b. My organization provides job security.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

c. My organization allows me flexibility to integrate my work and life domains with ease.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

d. My organization ensures that there is availability of personal services (dry cleaning, food services, shopping, etc.) at or near my work site.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

e. My organization has cultural diversity and empathy.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

f. My organization has a strong ethical culture.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

g. My organization provides time and funding to allow me to pursue advanced degree programs.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

h. My organization has a strong formal mentor/coaching program.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

i. My organization allows me time to support community service programs.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

j. My organization embraces integrating eco/green initiatives in our day-to-day work.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

k. My organization is well managed.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

l. My job is a good fit with a boss I admire.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

m. My organization provides differentiated compensation for top performers.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

n. My organization provides high total compensation.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

o. My job has an acceptable pace and level of stress.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

p. My organization is good at employee development.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

q. In my job, I am able to have fun with colleagues.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

r. My organization has many talented people.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

s. My organization has an inspiring mission.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

t. My organization has exciting challenges.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

u. My job has freedom and autonomy.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

v. My organization provides opportunities for career advancement and growth.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

w. My organization respects my time and work doesn't conflict with my lifestyle.

Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
5	4	3	2	1

**2. How often are the following organizational advantages demonstrated in your organization?**

a. My organization allows me the opportunity ability to telework or telecommute on a regular scheduled basis.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

b. My organization provides job security.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

c. My organization allows me flexibility to integrate my work and life domains with ease.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

d. My organization ensures that there is availability of personal services (dry cleaning, food services, shopping, etc.) at or near my work site.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

e. My organization has cultural diversity and empathy.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

f. My organization has a strong ethical culture.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

g. My organization provides time and funding to allow me to pursue advanced degree programs.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

h. My organization has a strong formal mentor/coaching program.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

i. My organization allows me time to support community service programs.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

j. My organization embraces integrating eco/green initiatives in our day-to-day work.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

k. My organization is well managed.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

l. My job is a good fit with a boss I admire.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

m. My organization provides differentiated compensation for top performers.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

n. My organization provides high total compensation.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

o. My job has an acceptable pace and level of stress.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

p. My organization is good at employee development.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

q. In my job, I am able to have fun with colleagues.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

r. My organization has many talented people.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

s. My organization has an inspiring mission.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

t. My organization has exciting challenges.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

u. My job has freedom and autonomy.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

v. My organization provides opportunities for career advancement and growth.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

w. My organization respects my time and work doesn't conflict with my lifestyle.

Almost Always	Sometimes	Every Once In a While	Rarely	Never
5	4	3	2	1

**3. What are your senior leader's (first Senior Executive Service civilian or general officer in your chain of leadership) top three leadership priorities?**

**4. What are the top five reasons you chose to accept a job or stay in a job in an organization?**

**5. Which of the current Army Acquisition Corps talent management practices are most effective in your organization?**